

P. A. 505 1024

A
VINDICATION
OF
Mr. NATION'S
SERMON,
IN A
LETTER^{By} to Mr. P. C.
Matthien To which is annex'd, A *Song* good
LETTER
FROM
Mr. NATION
TO THE
AUTHOR,
IN
Vindication of Himself,
With Respect to his
ORTHODOXY,
AND THE
Preface to his SERMON.

L O N D O N :

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LONDON

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A
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 OF
Mr. NATION's
SERMON.

Reverend SIR,

THAT it is with the *utmost Reluctance* you have publish'd *Animadversions* on the late SERMON preach'd at *Exon*, would not have been easily guess'd by an indifferent Reader, who compares them and this together, had you not mention'd it your self; but that it is with the *utmost Impertinence*, your nauseous Repetitions of the same unrighteous Charge, boyish Cavilling at Words and Phrases, vile Insinuations, trifling Aggravations, ridiculous Insults, and those haughty Airs you assume, sufficiently prove.

You have labour'd in sixty Pages to disgrace a Sermon, the Purport of whose latter Part, as well as Beginning, you confess, is to P. 22.

A 2

recommend

recommend nothing besides holy Living; and any one may see, who reads the Text, the Purport of that also was nothing else: For however true the Deity of the Son and Holy Ghost is, Mr. Nation had nothing to do herewith, whilst explaining and enforcing Practical Christianity, any more than with every other Truth contain'd in the Gospel. You fix an Emphasis on
 P. 5 Important Truths; but, Sir, do you know one Truth reveal'd by infallible Wisdom which is not important? Must not every Thing taught and commanded in sacred Scriptures be receiv'd as a Matter of Moment and Consequence, so that a Person must rather expose himself to the greatest Tortures, than deny or flinch from the same? If therefore Mr. N. must have undertaken the Proof of every Article of Faith contain'd in his Bible, to guard himself from the Imputation of symbolizing with Hereticks, in a single Discourse on Tit. ii. 11, 12. you might more justly have complain'd than now you can. Thousands of practical Sermons have been preach'd by those whose Orthodoxy was never question'd by their Brethren, which have not had one Syllable about the eternal Deity of the Son or Holy Spirit in them. How then comes it to pass, Sir, that so much notice must be taken of this one?

But Mr. N. speaks of some Controversies among Christians, as Circumstantial; and here,
 P. 10, 11. Sir, you take occasion to complain of our Ministry being invalidated, and all our Administrations made null and void by our Brethren of the Church of England, &c. And what wonder is it, say you, to see so many of late going over to the
 the

the establish'd Church, when the Differences between us and them are spoken of in so slight a manner? Sir, you may remember at the May Assembly in Exon the same Year, the Person who then preach'd, complain'd with great Freedom of Unscriptural Impositions, but was refus'd Thanks on that Account by several of his angry Brethren, who would not drop one candid Expression in his Favour; nay he was told that he had thereby expos'd himself to a Prosecution. So indeed has Mr. P. C. done here, and Mr. N. himself, in p. 10, 11. if some peevish Ecclesiasticks could persuade the Civil Powers to sacrifice us to their Rage and Malice.

But, Sir, however great the Difference may be betwixt us and Imposers of sinful Terms, (whether they call themselves Protestants or Papists,) the Difference among CHRISTIANS, truly so called, is comparatively small, the Things wherein they agree being of vastly greater Concernment than those wherein they differ. Such, I mean, as have deny'd Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and walk soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. As for those who lord it over God's Heritage, who instead of doing *their Master's Will* themselves, would oblige their *Fellow-Servants* to submit to *their own Humours*, or who will be Judges for their *Neighbours* as well as for *themselves*, (thus invading the Prerogative of him who is sole Head of his Church,) they are so far guilty of *Antichristianism*.

Other Controversies, you say, Mr. N. terms *p. 13*
 "Metaphysical, if rightly understood, and trac'd
 "up to their proper Head." Here you upbraid
 his

his Ignorance: But, Sir, you know there's hardly *one Article* of Faith but hath been more or less perplex'd with *Metaphysical* Subtilities: 'Tis therefore plain to me, that the Difference is not so *very great*, nor of the *least Concern* on which Side of the Question soever the Truth lies, if it *certainly* lies on *either* Side; for who can be infallibly sure that he is not mistaken in *any* of his *Theories* about so intricate a Point as that of the Trinity? I allow both Parts of a Contradiction can't be true, nay that *one* of these must be *true*, and the other *false*: But there may be a Mixture of Truth and Error in different Schemes which *fallible* Men have rais'd, and (as they think *themselves*) founded on the Scripture. That you may not suggest that I am a *disguis'd Arian*, as well as Mr. N. because I thus express myself, I freely own my self in the commonly receiv'd Opinion, because I still think that it has the fewest Difficulties; but *Difficulties* it has, and such as appear to my self *invincible*. I am therefore exceeding loath to condemn all whose Speculations do not quadrate with mine, as finding it impossible to explain this *Mystery* to my own, much less to *others* Satisfaction. Good Sir, let me seriously ask you whether you believe that the eternal Interest of every *Plowman* or *Mechanick* hangs on his adjusting the Sense of the Terms *Nature, Person, Essence, Substance, Subsistence, Coequality, Coessentiality, &c.* whether he necessarily exposes himself to divine Vengeance for want of distinct and accurate Ideas in *these*?

The Arian tells the Trinitarian, he believes Christ to be God as well as himself: But what
a God

a God do you make him, says the Trinitarian? Such a God as my Bible makes him, says the Arian; but pray what a God do *you* make him? No, replies the Trinitarian, you grossly pervert Scripture. Well, *both enter the Field*, and critical Learning, Philosophy, Fathers, and Councils are on both Sides press'd into their Service, with solemn Exclamations, passionate Scorns, repeated Triumphs; when the plain Christian, tho' impartial and earnest in his Search after the Truth, quickly loses *both the Combatants*, who are wrapt in Clouds, and scatter Darknes and Confusion around 'em. What shall *he* now do? Why, he is often either forced to an entire Suspension of his Judgment, or meets with a *secret Wound*, and a Dislike of his former Opinion, (tho' he can't easily prevail with himself wholly to quit it,) when he finds it *clogg'd* and *embarrass'd*, or else he becomes an Heretick, (as his Neighbours will call him,) and an Apostate from the Faith, and openly professes that, *at last*, which not long before he express'd the utmost Abhorrence and Detestation of; of course exposing *himself* to the same Censures which others lately met with from *him*. Sir, I have known my self several, both *Ministers* and *private Christians*, whom I have heard expressing their Indignation against *Arianism*, whom yet (to my no small Amazement) I have found in process of Time *zealous* Advocates for it. And here (to use your own Words in another Case) P. 7
 “ it would be the Height of Uncharitableness for
 “ any to suppose them abandon'd of God, or
 “ under a Judicial Infatuation.” For my part, I see Reason to use those Words of Mr. N. (which you have so frequently and unmercifully beaten

beaten upon) p. 2. "*The more I have studied
" and read, and been acquainted with the World,
" the more sensible have I been that the Path to
" Heaven lies not here, viz. in a Determination
" of this Point one way or other.*"

But you will say, What is it no matter whom we worship, or what sort of Worship we must pay? Yes, Sir, to be sure, and the Scriptures are exceeding plain to this Purpose, namely, *That we must worship the Father through the Son, by the Assistance of the Holy Spirit.* But must not the Son have Worship also given him? Yes, Sir, he must, and he must be worshipped too as *Mediator*, *John v. 22, 23.* For the Father hath committed all Judgment unto the Son, that all Men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. Christ, as *Mediator*, must be believed on, trusted in, pray'd unto, and praised. These are *Acts* of Worship. Now, Sir, all admit our blessed Lord to be inferior to his Father, consider'd in his *Mediatorial* Capacity. So that you are under a necessity of distinguishing here betwixt Worship and Worship, the Worship paid to the great God thro' a *Mediator*, and that Worship which is paid to the *Mediator himself*. Sir, I should avoid meddling with these Things, because Mr. N's Sermon is no ways concern'd in 'em; but that you would perhaps otherwise insinuate as if they were *designedly* past over. The Doctrine of Christ's *Satisfaction* (which you also take notice of) hath been handled with great Warmth by such as have brought heavy charges against one another about it. Mr. *Baxter* himself was represented by several of his Antagonists as *Socinianizing* on this Head. I don't

don't wonder, Sir, that *Deists* so abound, when 'tis grown so very hard a Thing for Persons to know what the *Principles of Christianity* are, as set forth in *Human Creeds*, and Books of Controversy. Men have grown weary of following *that*, about which they find the Learned in all Ages of the Christian Church have been *hereticating* and *dámning* one another, and have been ready to think and say 'tis *all Priestcraft*.

Christianity, as it came from our Saviour and his Apostles, as contain'd in the holy Scriptures, is very plain and intelligible. Whatsoever is necessary to be known in order to everlasting Happiness, may be understood by a Child; nor would it seem consistent with infinite Wisdom to have it otherwise. But proud worms (not content to read their Bibles for themselves, and fancying it a Disparagement to *their superior* Wisdom, if their Neighbours see not the same Things as they do) have been continually imposing *Tests of Orthodoxy*, which have either issued in the *vilest Hypocrisy* of those on whom they have been imposed, or the *vilest Barbarities* of the Imposers against them who have justly refus'd an *external* Compliance, in opposition to an *internal* Conviction. 'Tis high time, Sir, for all, especially for *Protestant Dissenters*, to lay aside every Thing that has the least Appearance of *Coercion*. This looks ridiculous enough in any, but peculiarly so in us, "*whose known and avowed Principle, you* P. 271 *say, it is, and has been our constant Practice*" *red. 35.*
(Pray, Sir, read that last Clause once more, and consider whether it strictly corresponds with Truth) "*to allow to every Man the Liberty of private*
B " *Judgment.*

"*Judgment.*" If indeed you mean by a Liberty of *private Judgment* the mere Act of Thinking, you allow him no more than what is *essential* to him as a Man: But if you understand a Liberty to *express* and *exercise* his private Judgment, many besides my self will think you have *overlab'd*. Can you, Sir, lay your Hand upon your Heart, and say, both on your own and your Brethrens Behalf, that none of you have either *directly* nor *indirectly* labour'd to hinder such a *Liberty of private Judgment*? That no single Person, through your Instigation or Influence, hath met with the least Inconvenience, or found any Interruption in the Comforts of Life, by *having*, or *being suppos'd to have*, some *Principles* different from what *you* thought to be the *Truths* of the Gospel? Hath no one suffer'd in his *Reputation* with his Friends, or his *Congregation*, and consequently in his *Purse*, by any Intimations of your Fears about his *Soundness* in the Faith?

P. 13.

You manifest a Desire "that *Things should be put upon a better Foundation, even such as is more consistent with Christian Liberty, and the Rights of the Gospel, and more agreeable to the Purity, Simplicity, and Rules of sacred Scripture.*"

But, Sir, what Reason have we to expect this, or with what Face can we desire it, whilst we are imposing our *Creeds* on one another? Will you say that *voluntary* Declarations and Subscriptions are only insisted on by *yourselves*? Can you think that *any others* will insist upon *involuntary* ones? Don't you think *all* desire, as well as *yourselves*, a *cheerful* Submission to
their

their Yoke? or will you say, you only insist on the *fundamental* Articles of the Christian Faith? Will not the warm Asserters of *Diocesan Episcopacy* say the same, who suppose it *essential* to the Constitution of the Christian Church, and that all *Ordinations*, and consequently all *publick Ministrations* are void and null without it? Nay, are not the Doctrines you mention of the *Romanists*, viz. *Transubstantiation, Infallibility, Purgatory, Merit, Indulgences, Praying to Saints and Angels*, reckon'd *Fundamentals* by themselves? Ay, but you'll say they are grossly mistaken. No, they'll say, but *you* are mistaken, *Hereticks as you are*, nay that confess yourselves to be *fallible* to boot. Or will you say, you are not for inflicting *such* Tortures as that *persecuting* Church allows? It may be answer'd, that you want *Power* to do so, that your Nails are so closely par'd, is the Reason you don't scratch; because you are muzzled, you don't bite; that all those Methods which you *can* use for the Mortification of Hereticks, you *don't fail* of putting in Practice: Such as examining their private Conversation, artfully putting Questions to them, that you may condemn them out of their own Mouths, (not much unlike the Oath *ex Officio*;) insinuating your deep Concern for their respective Flocks, and doing what you can to drive the poor *Shepherds* from 'em, by representing *them* as so many *Wolves*. Who can say how much farther you would go, were you not restrain'd? *Arians* have been represented as *Monsters of Mankind, Denyers of the Lord that bought 'em, Blasphemers of their blessed Saviour, Underminers of Christianity, Subverters of the Faith of the Gospel*. If these Charges against them are just, and their *Fellow-Creatures*

have any Authority to *chastise* them for such Enormities, I can't see why the *Romish* Church should be blam'd for *roasting* such accursed Villains among *other* Hereticks. If we think a Traitor against an *earthly* Potentate worthy of Death, how much more one, who vilifies the Lord of Heaven and Earth? Is a Murderer of his *earthly* Father obnoxious to Death, and shall such a *Viper* as *this* escape? I must confess, 'tis not at all surprising to hear, that Criminals executed for capital Offences move the Compassion of the Vulgar in *Popish* Countries, when *Hereticks*, or such as are suspected to have departed from the Catholick Faith, are beheld by them under their greatest Pain without the least Uneasiness, but rather with an Air of Triumph. Nor do I in the least doubt from the Satyrical Invectives I have heard dropping from the Lips of some *weak* and *injudicious*, but *devout* and *pious* Persons, that in Protestant Countries 'twould be an easy Thing to work up the Resentments of such as *innocently*, tho' *ignorantly* exclaim against something they call *Heresy*, to so great an Height, that they could see an *Arian* expiring in the Flames without any concern. Not, Sir, that I admit this to be a Testimony of their *Piety* or *Innocency*, but rather of the sad and universal Degeneracy of human Nature.

Well, but may you say, Must nothing be done to stop a growing Mischief? *Must Ministers sleep while the Enemy is sowing Tares?* Or must they see them *sown*, without endeavouring to *pluck* them up? To this I answer, Let such Methods be us'd as the Gospel will justify. Some of these you have mention'd. You must *pray* for such as *sow the Tares*, instead of
of

of *curſing* and *damning* them. And farther (as p. 59.
 you ſay) you muſt “ *not do any thing that may*
harden them in their Miſtakes.” But a weak
 and poor defence of the Truths you aſſert, mul-
 tiplying *Arguments* which are *little or nothing*
 to the Purpose, continual clamours againſt thoſe
 whoſe Arguments you have neither *confuted* nor
undertaken the Confutation of, have had ſuch
 a Tendency in *Devon*. *Arianism* has viſibly in-
 creased under the *Noſes* of thoſe who have made
 uſe of ſuch Methods to ſtop it. You muſt
 conſider Arians as ſtanding on the ſame Foot
 with yourſelf, nor may you or your Brethren
 make uſe of any other ways for *their* ſuppreſſion,
 than they in their turns may uſe againſt *you*.
 Before one and the ſame Judge muſt you and
 they all ſhortly appear: To *one Maſter* muſt all
 ſtand or fall. And what if notwithstanding all
 their *involuntary* Errors, they ſhould be *abſolv’d*
 at laſt? Or what if *they* ſhould then be in the
 right, and *yourſelves* miſtaken? Or what if *both*
 ſides ſhould appear to have laboured under
 very great Miſtakes, as doubtleſs they will?

But perhaps you’ll ſay, Muſt there be no
Order, no *Uniformity* obſerv’d in the Church of
 Chriſt? Muſt Perſons *believe* what they pleaſe,
 and *propagate* their Notions to the Diſturbance
 of the Church’s Peace, and muſt the *reſt* be
 ſilent? To this I ſay, If *Peace in the World*
 be deſtroy’d by any Notions oppoſite to the
 Civil Government, viz. That *Dominion is found-*
ed in Grace, that *no Faith is to be kept with*
Hereticks, that *the promiſcuous Uſe of Women is*
lawful, &c. they who inſtill ſuch Principles
 as theſe into *others*, or act in Conformity to ’em
themſelves, are doubtleſs expoſed to the juſt
 Animad-

Animadversions of *earthly* Magistrates. And if restless, factious Zealots disturb *religious* Societies by a continual *harping* on some *Peculiarities*; if they are ever promoting Controversies about Things wherein *wise and good Men* differ, instead of provoking to *Love and good Works*, the Members of *such* Societies may certainly withdraw themselves from 'em, as Enemies to the Peace of the Church, as well as from any other *immoral* Persons: But if those that *disagree* from each other in some particular Sentiments, can yet *harmonize* in affection, and *do endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, there's then no disturbance of the *Church's Order*. A mistaken Zeal for Uniformity has from Age to Age thrown both World and Church into *dreadful Convulsions*. To be sure in this imperfect State, where there is so great a Diversity of Opinions, and where Men are found (as they advance in Life) *so often* to differ even from *themselves*, nothing but most horrid Prevarication, both with God and Man, can support an *outward* Uniformity in *Principles*. The safest Rule we can follow, is, that which our blessed Lord hath left us, Mat. vii. 12. *Therefore all Things, whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets*. You may say, indeed, that if ever you should become an *Arian*, and think as meanly of Christ as *such a one* does, You should deserve as *severe*, nay far *worse* Treatment than those of that Denomination have met with: And so a Papist may say, if ever he should turn *Heretick*, he'll give any one leave to *slay him alive*. Things of this Nature are easily said by Men in Ease and Prosperity, with Reference
to

to *Persons* and *Things* they dislike; but when themselves are *cramp'd*, will soon fly to the same Arguments for the Removal of their Grievances, which have *never fail'd* of being us'd by Men of all Denominations, Protestants, Papists, Jews, Turks, &c. when restrain'd in their Religious Liberties.

You say, "that it is generally found by Ex- P. 19. perience, that Good Doctrines lead to Good Practices," and charge Mr. N. with a great Omission here, as forbearing "to instruct the Ignorant and Unbelieving World in the glorious Truths and Doctrines of Christianity, &c. to which the practical Part is subsequent." But, Sir, be pleas'd to consider a little not only Mr. N's *Text* (which I have already taken some Notice of) but his *Auditory*. He preach'd a Sermon not to *Turks*, or *Jews*, or *Pagans*, or indeed *Arians* or *blinded Papists*, but reform'd *Protestants*, and Protestant *Divines*. However, *several Glorious Truths* were mention'd by him, whose Connexion with Practical Christianity he observ'd in *several Pages*.

But how came he to omit the *Eternal Deity* of the Son of God? Why, Sir, Mr. N. might think it needless to discourse upon it *in such a Pulpit* as had for several Years more or less rung of it, and had made divers sick of the Controversy, who found practical Discourses more pleasing and profitable.

Besides (not that I would suggest any Thing to detract from so sublime a Mystery) it must be acknowledged, that Multitudes who have profess'd the Soundness of their *Faith in the Trinity*,

Trinity, have walk'd as *irregularly* as the greatest Oppugners of it. You know, Sir, the Church of *Rome* asserts a Trinity in Unity, and the Doctors of that Communion have been great and Learned Defenders of it; who, whilst they have been warm Advocates for our Saviour's Deity, have plunder'd him of all his Offices; Prophetical, Priestly, and Kingly, and invaded his Prerogative. But to come nearer home, there are many Thousands in our Land whose Faith in our Saviour's Deity is profess'd, whilst in Works they deny him. This I mention on the Account of those many severe Reflections occurring in your Letter to Mr. N. as if he had entirely subverted Practical Christianity, instead of promoting it, by saying nothing upon this Article.

P. 4. This on the Doctrine of the Trinity you assert, tho' in flat Contradiction to your Title Page; (*A Letter to Mr. Nation in Defence of the Assembly, &c.*) to be the chief Occasion of your Letter; "But I can assure you, the Vindication of ourselves is the least part of our Concern. It is the Vindication of the Eternal Deity of the Son and Holy Ghost; 'tis the Vindication of the Faith against the growing Errors broach'd among us, that is the chief Occasion of this Letter." 'Tis somewhat strange that you should so soon forget yourself, (the Words that I have cited being but a very few Lines from the Title Page) that when the Letter is said to be in Defence of the Assembly, yet you assure Mr. N. the Defence of the Assembly is the least part of your Concern, and the chief Occasion of your Letter is something else. I won't say, Sir, as you do, to Mr. N. "that
you

P. 43.

“ you say this in your undigested Way” ; but let me tell you, ’tis such a Slip as *exposeth* One who writes in so assuming a Manner as yourself.

And, good Sir, What is it after all, that you have written in *Vindication of the Eternal Deity of the Son and Holy Ghost*. A Man must have a *nicer Discernment* than either Mr. N. or myself, that can find *Ten Lines* from the Beginning to the End of your Letter in Vindication of the Eternal Deity of *either of* them. You have indeed interspers’d some Orations from Learned Names, to prove *Socinians* and *Arians* guilty of Idolatry from their own *Schemes*. But what have you advanc’d any where in direct Vindication of the *Truth* their *Schemes* oppose ? Surely, Sir, something of this Kind might very justly have been expected from you after so *solemn* a Profession of your *Concern*.

“ Should we, say you, be silent when you make P. 4.
“ so light of the great Principles of Christianity,
“ and others are labouring to wrest them out of our
“ Hands, how should we answer it to him who bath
“ caution’d us against Sleeping while the Enemy
“ is sowing Tares ? We dare not purchase Peace at
“ the Expence of Truth.”

Again, you say to Mr. N. “ If instead of P. 5.
“ endeavouring to promote Practical Christianity,
“ you had not exerted yourself with so much
“ Warmth to sink the Value of so many Important
“ Truths of the Christian Religion, upon which a
“ regular Practice of it must be establish’d &c.

C

Again

P. 18.

Again, " I am sure you spoil'd all again after-
ward, when you put so great a Slight upon the
Articles of Faith in many Places : Whereas
the very Controversies now depending do palpably
strike at the Foundation of Christianity, and
the Errors lately reviv'd do alter the whole
Frame of the Christian Religion, bring in a-
nother Gospel, and deeply affect both our Wor-
ship and Practice.

Accordingly, you tell Mr. N. this " manifest
Contempt which you put upon the great Things
of Faith now disputed (wherein no less than E-
ternal Deity is concern'd) greatly offended some
of your Brethren."

P. 21.

Again you charge Mr. N. with " throwing
up the Faith with respect to the Deity of Christ
and the Holy Spirit, without one Struggle for
it.

P. 24.

You say " This way of proceeding must cer-
tainly, be intended highly in Favour of Soci-
nians, Arians, Pelagians, &c.

" Upon the whole (you say) it is very evident
that you pay little Regard to those vast and
wonderful Discoveries in the Gospel, which are
the Fruit of pure Revelation.

Again, " Had you manifested any tolerable
Regard to those Truths which you knew to be
of so great Account with most of your Audi-
tors, &c.

P. 25.

You charge Mr. N. with making Reflec-
tions on All who have stood up for the true
and

and proper *Deity* of our Saviour and the Holy Ghost, and for the *Importance* of these Doctrines of the *Gospel* which of late Years have been denied by many.

You say, " *It seems to be the plain Drift of P. 31. your Introduction and Application first to represent the Difference between those who assert, and those who deny the Deity of our Saviour and the Holy Ghost, to be small and inconsiderable, and then to load those that have appear'd any way zealous in Defence of the Trinity with your uncharitable Reflections.*

Certainly (say you again) you could have no just P. 32. Occasion to have dress'd up the Defenders of Christ's Deity in so frightful a Livery as here, and in p. 31 and 32. you have done. However, (say you) while they themselves (i. e. your Brethren) do believe the proper Godhead of our Saviour and the Holy Ghost, they cannot but think, that those who deny it are guilty of a very dangerous Error.

After such Exaggerations as these, such cutting Rebukes, a Friend to the Arians might well be suppos'd to be in some Pain for 'em; and an Enemy to the *New Scheme* on the other Hand to rejoice at the Prospect of what *was coming*. It might be thought, these Adversaries of our Saviour's Deity, would now be unmask'd from Head to Foot, be stripp'd to the very Skin, be ferreted out of every lurking Hole, and forc'd from their strongest Intrenchments; but instead hereof, there's nothing but empty Noise and Clamour. Perhaps, Sir, you may Imagine, some of your Readers will take your heavy and unreasonable Reproaches of Mr. N. for not vindicating

dicating his Lord's Divinity, in the room of a *Vindication of it* from yourself, but I am very apprehensive *many* of 'em will think *that* of the Poet very applicable to you.

Quid tanto dignum tulit hic promissor biatu?

P. 18.

You blame Mr. N. for saying, *if practical Religion were secur'd, it would secure all the rest.* And, Sir, don't you take *this* to be a great Truth? They who keep the *Laws* of Christ, do surely keep the *Faith* of Christ. A Gospel Conversation necessarily demonstrates a Gospel Faith, as the Cause is demonstrated by the Effect. If there is no such Thing as a *Man's shewing his Faith by his Works*, St. James was mistaken, Chap. ii. 18. And so was our *Saviour* too, when he taught a Tree was to be known by his Fruits; nay, you say yourself, p. 19. *Faith the Root, and good Works the Fruit.* Now if a Man hath good Works the *Fruit*, must he not have Faith the *Root*? Mr. N. so confounds Orthodoxy in Opinion with practical Christianity, as not to suppose 'em capable of a Separation: Though in their *formal* Consideration they are two Things (*i. e.* *Faith* is not *Practice*, and *Practice* is not *Faith*) yet are they necessarily *united* in every *true Christian*, nor can they be any more disjoint'd than the *Sun* and the *Light* that proceeds from it. If I see not a *sound* Life, I may justly infer the want of a *sound* Faith; and if I see a *sound* Life, I presently conclude there is a *sound* Faith. And it would be as absurd for me to call in question the Orthodoxy of a practical Christian, as it would to ask whether the Sun shines at Noon-day. If you can get a Man to *walk*, you have no need to doubt whether

whether *he has Feet*; if you see a Bird flying, you may reckon it has *Wings*. I will also as *strongly* infer the *Heterodoxy* or *Unsoundness* of every vicious Person: Let him talk never so long or loud of his Soundness in the Faith, if I can prove him an *habitual Drunkard*, an *Whoremonger*, or a *gripping Knave*, I prove him, *ipso facto*, an Heretick. But *mayn't such a one have sound Principles*? No surely, he can't; he must have recourse to some such Notions (as Mr. N. justly presses us to labour to reform our People from) to guard him from Midnight Terrors, and those *Qualms* which would otherwise more frequently assaule him.

You speak, indeed, with some Indignation P. 28. against this Advice given by *him*; but, alas, *misprinted*. Sir! the longer I live in the World, the more Reason I see to warn Persons of such Errors as these, viz. *As long as they believe aright, 'tis no matter how they live; that Christ will be their Saviour, and God will be merciful unto them, tho' they go on to rebel against him.* I put to the Score of these Opinions that Dissoluteness of Manners among the Papists, who, as long as they are *sound* in the CATHOLICK FAITH, commit the most monstrous Impieties without Remorse, not doubting but their *Orthodoxy* will make amends for all. I likewise place to the Account of these *Antinomian* Errors the many Abominations committed in *this Kingdom*. What Multitudes *here* value themselves on their Adherence to the *Orthodox* Church of *England*, tho' they drink up Iniquity as the Ox drinketh Water? With what Contempt will they speak of *Schism* and *Schismatics*? And however *spotless* the Characters and Conversations of those whom they

they traduce may be, they'll profess their *Suspicion* of *their* eternal State, however secure of *their own* they appear while adding Drunkenness to Thirst. Should not, Sir, every Minister of the Gospel bear his Testimony against such *execrable Enthusiasm*? But, you'll say, how does this affect *our* People? Why, Sir, to be plain with you, I can't think Cautions against such pernicious Doctrines useless even as to *them*. When *our* Congregations were in their greatest Purity and Perfection, some such accursed Weeds have sprung up, if the Accounts of Mr. Baxter and many others may be depended upon. But since we have *so much* degenerated from the *Strictness* of our Ancestors, your Remark on Mr. N. looks exceeding *preposterous*. Can you think all who attend on our Ministry are absolutely free from *Imaginations* so grateful to *corrupt* Nature, and therefore most greedily suck'd in?

The more, Sir, I think both on Mr. N's Sermon and your Letter, the more Reason does there appear to me to oppose *Antinomianism*. 'Tis from *this Root* of Bitterness so many are defil'd. I allow, Sir, Persons of all Denominations may be *immoral*, but I can't suppose their Immoralities owing to *those peculiar Sentiments*, whereby they are distinguish'd into *Parties*, but those *Antinomian* Errors which more or less prevail among *some of every Sect*. The *Deists* themselves (I mean such of 'em as are distinguish'd from *Atheists*) are oblig'd, pursuant to the Principles of natural Religion, to a sober Life; and when they give themselves at any time a *loose*, must betake themselves for Shelter to the *foremention'd* Errors. We commonly impute the
great

great Licentiousness in *Morals* among us to a Licentiousness in *Principles*, and very justly. But what *Principles*? Do ~~not~~ think Drunkards reel in our Streets, Adulterers defile their Neighbours Beds, perjur'd Rogues abound in City and Country, &c. because they are turn'd ARIANS, or SOCINIANS, or PELAGIANS, &c? Is it not rather because they either believe *no God at all*, or have such unworthy and detestable Idea's of him, as incourage them in so horrid a Violation of his Laws? Mr. N. has not therefore been guilty of a *most groundless and unjust Reproach*, nor yet a *base and wicked* P. 29. Charge (as you represent him) but what too *misprinted*. many living Instances will justify him in. Pray, Sir, forbear those *Triumphs* and *Insults*, when flagrant Matters of Fact are so *sorrowful* and *melancholy* a Contradiction to them.

" *General Reflections*, you say, *must be found-* Ibid.
 " *ed on the Temper or Actions of particular Persons*,
 " *otherwise they must needs be unrighteous and*
 " *groundless.*"

Do you mean, Sir, that the Men on whose *Temper or Actions* such *Reflections* are founded, must be always personally present, or otherwise they must needs be unrighteous? In your *general* Declamations against Vice and Profaneness, do you think it necessary that Persons *obnoxious* must be *still* under the Pulpit, in order to support the *Equity* of your Charges? Surely a Preacher may inveigh with as great Warmth and Pungency as he can against Swearing, Murder, Theft, Sodomy, &c. tho' there should not be one Swearer, Murderer, &c. in the whole Congregation. Wherefore Mr. N. may easily be

be defended, if there were none, either *Ministers* or *People*, then in the *Way* to fall under his *general Reflections*.

Ay, but you'll say, there were *certain*, in that Assembly, whom Mr. N. was suppos'd to have his Eye upon.

Serm.
P. 33-

P. 6.

Sir, I am heartily sorry there should be the least *Room* for such a Supposition that does manifestly reflect *Dis honour* on *any* in an Assembly of Protestant Dissenting Ministers; that there should be Ground to suspect the Preacher must mean some of his *Brethren*, as liable to the Imputation of having a *blind*, a *furious Zeal*, and a *persecuting Spirit*, &c. A Person may declaim as long as he pleases against *common Prostitutes* before a Company of *honourable Matrons*, whose Character is well known, and Reputation thoroughly establish'd, without any Complaints of his carrying a distasteful Mixture of *Party-Business* in his *Invectives*; nay, he may justly expect the Approbation and Thanks of *all* his Hearers, the Consciousness of whose Innocency secretly refreshes them, when they find the Scandals of *their Sex* (tho' never so smartly) expos'd.

But you know, Sir, (the Comparison I own is somewhat homely) *gaul'd Horses will wince*: Sores can't bear rubbing, and the greater they are, the more Pain does even a gentle Touch of the Finger give him that labours under them. When there has been an Abstinence from all *Appearance* of Evil, with what Assurance and Satisfaction in a *Man's own Breast* may the *severest* Strictures on the Conduct of *others* be heard?

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I am pretty sure such a Sermon as Mr. N's would not have been thought *exasperating*, had it been preach'd before *many* (not to say *any*) other Assemblies of Dissenting Ministers in the Kingdom. For (I speak it to the Honour of *Non-conformists* and *Non-conformity* in general,) that, bating a few *rigid Gentlemen* in the West, and *here and there one* in some other Parts of the Kingdom, there was never a more perfect Consistency betwixt the *Principles* and *Practices* of those who separate from the *National Establishment*; nor was their *Cause* ever defended with greater Effort of Thought and Argument, nor with more answerable Success than in the present Age. 'Tis too well known to admit of the least *rational* Doubt, that *vast Numbers*, who seldom or never join with us in publick Worship, yet entirely harmonize in those Principles which *justify our Separation* from the Church of *England*. It has been too just an Observation, that as practical Christianity declines, so does the Interest of Nonconformity in proportion; and one Reason of the so great Declension of *both* has been the *Fury* and *Irritation* wherewith Controversies have been manag'd. About *such Things* (and in *such a Way*) as exceed the Apprehensions of the common People, and which yet, were they more *thoroughly* understood than they are, would have no *certain* or *necessary* Influence on the great Duties of Christianity. 'Tis not strange to find Persons who are perpetually amusing themselves with Speculations in Religion, and endeavouring to settle their Judgments aright, sensibly cool in the devotional Part, and feel a sad Languor of Affections with regard to real substantial Godliness. 'Tis not, Sir, a Want of contending for the

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Faith,

P. 37 38
P. 29, 30.
misprinted.

Faith, but our *headstrong* and *headlong* Contendings about it, that have so sunk the Practice of true Virtue and Piety amongst us, and exposed both *Nonconformity* in particular, and *Christianity* in general, to the Derision and Scorn of Infidels. How many Thousands of pious Souls have gotten safely to Heaven, that never understood five Lines of those Controversies, about which the *learned Zealots* of the Age have been so fiercely squabbling? I can therefore see no Cause for that *baughty Paragraph* of yours, wherein you thus express yourself:

“ Upon the whole, most of your *Brethren* thought that neither the *Time* nor the *Place*, nor the *Preacher*, were proper for these Reflections.”

Sir, whatever *Parties too nearly concern'd* might think (who are not allow'd to be the best Judges in their own Case,) *many others* have thought the *Time* very proper. When so many Ministers were met together, 'twas not surely inexpedient to warn them of those Things, which, if not guarded against, had an apparent Tendency to disgrace both *them* and their *Ministrations*. Mr. N. says indeed, *I do not charge any here with these Things*; for particular Charges against particular Persons would be very *rude* and *indecent*, but (you may observe) he does not say that *none* here were *chargeable* with *none* of the Things which he had mention'd. 'Tis a Method no way unbecoming a Pulpit, to wrap up particular Charges in general Expressions, and to mingle *those* Things where-with none present *can* justly be charg'd, with others,

others, to the Charge of which they are *obnoxious*, and leave it to the Consciences of such as are *concern'd* to take their *proper Share*.

Nor has the *Place* been thought less proper for such a Sermon: In a *Pulpit* too much us'd (or I am greatly misinform'd) for several past Years to fruitless and vexatious Contests, to satyrical Scorns, to uncharitable Censures, Antidotes against these could not be *unseasonably* dropp'd. You say, "When such very ill P. 38
 " Things are vented on these *publick* Occasions
 " against one another, they are apt to foment
 " Strifes and Divisions among *Ministers* and
 " *People*." Sir, it ought to be consider'd whether such *very ill* Things are *true* Things, next whether they are *publick* Things; if so, they may come under a *publick* Reprehension. There is a Passage in a certain Author to this Purpose, (*Truth and Liberty*, p. 94.) "I would fain
 " know whether we may'nt speak of the Arian
 " or any other Error, as it doth deserve,
 " without Injustice or Violence, without being
 " Slanderers or Revilers, &c." Is not this as applicable to *Facts* as *Notions*. A *faithful Monitor* can't be accountable for the Consequences of his Reproofs, which are *too often* Confusions, Calumnies, Backbitings, Whisperings, &c. instead of a *thankful Acknowledgment* of such his *Faithfulness*, and that *Reformation* which should follow after it. And, Sir, let me tell you, if
 " our Disputes had been so *happily dropp'd*" (as P. 3.
 you suggest) this Sermon so manifestly calculated to *promote Peace*, could not possibly have *reviv'd* them.

Nor yet in the last Place, can I think the Preacher so very improper for this Work as you would represent him. You'll do well to inform the World, Sir, of what *Age*, what *Reading*, what *Reputation*, what *Study* and *Acquaintance with the World* a Man had need be, who dares to preach a Sermon according to *his own Conviction* and *Sense of Things*, before the Assembly of the united Ministers of *Devon* and *Cornwall* in *Exon*, that none in Time to come may dash against the same Rock on which Mr. N. hath split, and for which you have so *toss'd* him in your Letter. To speak my own Mind freely, I thought him peculiarly fitted for that Province assign'd him, as a *Convert from Bigotry*, at least from *some Degrees* thereof, which he seems to insinuate he was too much possess'd of heretofore. He has not indeed openly renounced *his Agreement with his Brethren in the Faith which he professeth*; but if he has openly renounced any *Narrowness* of Spirit; any undue *Warmth* which proceeded from his *Ignorance*, let him have his just *Encomium*. 'Tis not, Sir, with an *ill Grace* that a Man mentions his *Reading*, *Study*, and *Acquaintance with the World*, as far as *these* have taught him more *Modesty* and *Humility*, have made him *less censorious*, and have dispos'd him to exercise Charity towards all good Men, and love such who love God, and are loved by him, whatever *faction* Names they may be distinguish'd by. 'Twas (I thought) a very graceful Appearance that Mr. N. made, when (notwithstanding his *Youth*, and the *Lothness* usually found in younger Years to confess a Mistake) he could so *boldly* and *bravely* own himself to have been in an Error. Ah! that there were more Examples of this kind, that

Men

Men would not think it a necessary Point of Honour *always* to defend that which they have once undertaken the Defence of. Many, both in *City* and *Country*, have not been asham'd to own themselves mistaken, nor can I see that such a *Confession* has at all turn'd to their Discredit, or at least that it *ought* to do so.

'Tis therefore, Sir, (to use your own Words in another Case) “ a *very large*, and I doubt a P. 21,
 “ *rash Expression* of yours to Mr. N. when you say, “ How much soever you may think your P. 38
 “ Reflections will stick on those at whom they were levell'd, and lessen their Reputation,
 “ 'tis MOST CERTAIN they will prove an Injury to *one* for whom they were least intended, even the Preacher himself, who hereby
 “ sinks his own Character, with ALL WISE
 “ and GOOD MEN.” Pray, Sir, read it over again, and consider whether 'tis not a *bold* and *unprov'd* Assertion. By what *Authority* is it that you engross all *Wisdom* and *Goodness* to your self, and those who think and speak according to your Mind? If the *Church* of *Rome* talks in such a manner, who in her very great Modesty confines all the *Wisdom* and *Goodness* to herself, 'tis with an *ill Grace* that such a Saying drops from the *Pen* of a *Protestant Dissenter*. But to set you a little *at rights* here, I shall for your Information transcribe Part of a Letter which I very lately receiv'd from the *City* where the Sermon was preach'd.

“ I have made it my Business to enquire into
 “ the Sense of many of my Acquaintance as to
 “ Mr. *Nation's* Sermon, and can now assure
 “ you, notwithstanding that *bold Assertion* of
 “ Mr.

“ Mr. P. C. of *his* having sunk his Character
 “ with *all wise and good Men*, there is not the
 “ least Foundation for it, so that you may ven-
 “ ture to tell P. C. that you find he is a Stran-
 “ ger not only to *other Parts* of the World,
 “ but even to *that City* in which the Sermon
 “ was preach’d: For even amongst those there,
 “ that constantly attend upon the Ministry of
 “ his *Brethren*, there were many of the *first*
 “ *Rank* for *Substance*, as well as for *Wisdom*
 “ and *Goodness*, that *did* and *do* still approve of
 “ Mr. Nation’s Sermon; and not only so, but
 “ look upon his Attempt to ruin the *Character*,
 “ and consequently the *Usefulness* of the Au-
 “ thor, to be *very base and wicked*.”

There’s another Thing, Sir, I can’t forbear
 remarking in your Letter, *viz.* Your meddling
 so much as you do with Mr. N’s *Conversation*
 in *private*, and the Influence *this* hath over him,

- P. 30. thus: “ It is well known that you have been
 “ very *free* in your *private* Censures about this
 P. 39. “ Matter.” Again, “ Would not you yourself
 “ have censur’d us among your *inward* Friends?”
 P. 56, 57. And, “ What can any think, but that you
 “ were governed more by your *Affections*, or
 “ some one that hath an *Ascendant* over you,
 “ than by your Reason and Understanding?”
 P. 59. Once more, “ Few (who read your Sermon
 “ or know how much you make it your Busi-
 “ ness to *asperse* them, *i. e.* your Brethren in *pri-*
 “ *vate*) can easily believe, that you abound in
 “ Charity towards such. ’Tis well known in
 “ what *Channels* the strongest Streams of your
 “ *Charity* run.” Do you look, Sir, on these
 Passages as becoming a *Scholar* or a *Gentleman*?
 Are they not *Innuations* too mean for a Person
 of polite Education? Are you angry with him,
 Sir,

Sir, because he does not consult you about the *Choice* of his Friends? That he ventures (*young as he is*) into promiscuous Company without your *Leave* and *Direction*? Possibly Mr. N. might herein be mov'd by the *Psalmist's* Example, who said *Psal. cxix. 63. I am a Companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy Precepts.* And for my Part, I can't condemn him for his regarding such a *Precedent*, tho' Mr. P. C. should be never so much displeas'd.

But may you say; What, Can they be suppos'd to *fear God* who deny the *Deity* of the Son of God? Was not Mr. N. told, "that P. 17. *Works without Faith were dead, as well as Faith without Works?*" And can such an *Infidel* as an *Arian* is, perform any Duties acceptable in the sight of God? To which I freely reply, I am persuaded *He may*; and that Good Works will be accepted by a good and gracious God thro' the Merits of Christ, without FAITH in any distinguishing *Schemes*, on the Account whereof, too many are prone to assume to themselves the Name of *true Believers*. The want of *Faith* in *Diocesan Episcopacy*, or a *Presbyterian Parity*, the want of *Faith* in *Pædobaptism*, or *Antipædobaptism*, the want of *Faith* in the *First Day Sabbath*, as oppos'd to the *Seventh*, or the *Seventh* as oppos'd to the *First*, with a Multitude of *Things* besides, will never render good Works *dead* and *useless*. These (you may say) are *Circumstantials*, but will not Want of *Faith* in *Fundamentals* spoil the best Works? To this I answer, *Truths*, however *Fundamental* they are to those who *see* them, or *Imagine* they *see* them to be so, are so far from being *Fundamental* to him, that, after his
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strict and Impartial Search in his Bible, *cannot find* 'em there, that they cease to be any *Truths* at all, as to *himself*: not that a Person's *Belief* or *Disbelief* of a Proposition will change the *Nature* of it, consider'd *abstractly*; For Instance, my believing the Arian Scheme to be *right* does not *make* it *right*, nor will my Believing it to be *false* make it *false*. But if after my *serious* Addressesto Heaven for Instruction, join'd with my *sincere* Endeavours, I find the *Eternal Deity* of the Son of God, and his *Equality* with the Father in the Bible, I must believe it, and (if providentially call'd thereto) profess it in the Face of the greatest Opposition, and stand boldly to it in spite of Men or Devils. Or if after the *same* Application to the Father of Lights, join'd with the like *sincere* Endeavours, *my Brother* (whether my Superior or Inferior in Natural or Acquir'd Parts) *cannot find* the *Eternal Deity* of the Son of God, &c. at least in the same Sense that I can; (but believes the *Arian* Scheme to be true, and the *Trinitarian* to be false) he is under the same Obligations to adhere to what he thinks the *Faith* of the *Gospel*, as I am: And as a Trinitarian would act a vile Part to profess himself an Arian, so an *Arian* would be equally vile to profess himself a *Trinitarian*. Both therefore the *One* and the *Other* must keep on in the Way of their Duty, according to their *best Light* here; and while they do so, may *both* of 'em refresh themselves with the chearful Hopes of a State of *perfect Light* hereafter.

Wherefore Mr. N. may very easily be defended in those Words which he useth, p. 36. of his Sermon, *viz.* that *God will make all Allowances*

allowances for the meer Errors of Mens Understandings. And the Citations from *John viii. 21. John* P. 21.
iii. 18. serve not in the least your Purpose. For nothing is more plain, than this, that the Unbelief of the Jews was not a *meer* Error of their *Understandings*, but rather of their Wills. Their Prejudices at the Meanness of our Saviour's Birth, their Fondness for secular Grandeur, their Expectations of *One* who should rescue them from their present *Bondage* under the *Romans*, &c. were the Causes of their Disbelief. These things blinded their Reason, and prevented their Impartial Inquiries into the Truth, which had they *sincerely* sought, they should have found.

I must therefore own my great Dislike of that Paragraph in your Letter, wherein you P. 57, 58.
 seem to trample on *Sincerity*. "Nor should a
 " *Pretence*, say you, that Persons are *sincere* in
 " what they profess (which you tell Mr. N.
 " is what he harps upon) be of any Weight in
 " this Case to keep any from a *Christian* and
 " *Calm* Opposition of spreading Errors." So far you are Right. To be sure, whether the *Pretence* be *real* or otherwise, a *Christian* and *Calm* Opposing of Errors is defensible: But 'tis certainly worth your while to re-examine the Reason you have assign'd for it, *viz. Because it is not Mens SINCERITY in Errors that will excuse them.* What, Sir, do you think will excuse them? Will their *HYPOCRISY* do it? If they swim down the popular Current, and profess to assent unto that which the *GREATEST* or the *MOST* do call *Orthodox* (whether they *really believe* it, or not) will that excuse them? What Comfort, Sir, can a Man find in
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Life or Death without *Sincerity*? Under all the Apprehensions of his Folly and Darkness, what can refresh him but the Consciousness of his *sincere* Desire to *know* and *do* his Master's Will? *Who can understand his Errors*? The most knowing *Divine*, the most sagacious Inquirer sees Reason to confess his Imperfections in many things. Whither then can such a One retreat, but to his *Sincerity*? What, Sir, but *this* can support *you* in the Course of your Ministry, in the several Parts of your Conduct? What but *this* will keep you from *Despondency* in your last Moments? A Reflection on the Infinite *Mercies* of the great God, on the Infinite *Merits* of Jesus Christ, on the glorious Promises of the Gospel, will not afford you the least Satisfaction; except you can appeal to the Searcher of Hearts concerning your *Sincerity*; unless you believe that every *Individual* shall go to Heaven; or that the bold, presumptuous Reliance of an *Insincere Wretch* on the Blood of Christ will bring him thither, and so fall into the very Dregs of *Antinomianism*. Ah! Is your Zeal against Errors come to this? Are you willing to dash in pieces the Hopes of Christians in all Ages, who have just Reason to fear they labour under *gross Errors*, nay who are sure they cannot but be in *Errors*, as long as they are on this side of Heaven? Would you cripple at once all their Expectations of future Blessedness, whilst they act according to the best of their Light and Knowledge, with constant Dependance on Divine Grace, by assuring them that their Sincerity in Errors won't *excuse* them? that is to say, that notwithstanding all the *Pains* they have taken for a just Information in the Will of God, after the *Sin-*
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cerest Endeavours they have used to understand it, if they mistake in *some Point*, (as 'tis *ten Thousand to One* but they will; nay impossible *but they should*,) for so doing they are liable to *Everlasting Damnation*.

Ποιον σε φυγει εκος ερκος οδοντων.

You might have suppos'd that the DEVIL (were it in his Power) would destroy *sincere* Christians, as well as *rotten* Hypocrites, that *Infernal Fiends* would triumph in the Ruin of the *Best*, as well as the *Worst*, but can you; ah! can you think it of the *bless'd God*? Can you conceive *any thing* so opposite to infinite *Goodness*? not to say, infinite *Justice*? Gen. xviii, 25. *That be far from thee to do after this Manner, to slay the Righteous with the Wicked, and that the Righteous shall be as the Wicked, that be far from thee: shall not the Judge of all the Earth do Right?*

You proceed, "St. Paul, I must think, was *P. 50*
" *very sincere*, whilst a *blaspheming, persecuting,*
" *injurious Jew*."

This *daring* and *horrid* Assertion is far more *shocking* than any Thing you can find in Mr. N's Sermon. *Either*, Sir, I can have no Idea of *Sincerity* (as commonly *us'd* and *understood*) or what you here say is as contradictory to Truth as *Darkness* to *Light*. Pray, Sir, examine your Bible, and see whether you can meet with any *very sincere* Blasphemers, *very sincere* Persecutors or *injurious* Wretches *there*. I could heartily wish you had been fast *asleep* when your unguarded Pen was sowing such pernicious

Tares. Must you think a Man very sincere who is so very vile as the inspir'd History represents unconverted Saul to have been? who seem'd for a Season so perfectly lost to all Tenderness and Compassion? who acted in direct Repugnancy to the Light and Law of Nature? in whom common Humanity seem'd to be quite extinguish'd? Can such a furious Blood-hound, such a Salvage, such an incarnate Devil, be very sincere? What St. Paul says concerning his Ignorance, when a Jew, won't in the least help you in the present Case; for though he verily thought he ought to do many Things against Jesus of Nazareth, yet he might and should have thought better. The Ignorance he labour'd under was exceeding criminal; nor do we find him any where saying the least Syllable in his Vindication on that Account. He had been bred at the Feet of the learned Gamaliel; he was himself a Person of great natural as well as acquir'd Parts; he had Moses and the Prophets, and by an impartial and disinterested Scrutiny of these, he might have come to the Knowledge of the Messias, (comparing Old Testament Predictions with what had been so lately accomplished, and was still accomplishing in his own Days;) he had seen, or he might have seen many and great Wonders wrought in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth. Being (as may justly be suppos'd) a curious and inquisitive Person) he might have easily inform'd himself of the Truth of our Saviour's Resurrection from the Dead, which Circumstance the Apostles appeal'd unto, as a sufficient Proof of the Christian Religion. The miraculous Effusion of the holy Spirit at the Feast of Pentecost in so publick a Manner, with the amazing Success of the Gospel in the Mouths

Mouths of illiterate Mechanics, (notwithstanding the terrible Opposition of *Jews* and *Gentiles*) had a Tendency to convince one who would but have admitted any sober Reflections in his Breast about these Things. I am asham'd to think that any *Christian Divine* should say a Word of the *Sincerity* of such a proud prejudic'd Zealot, such a conceited fantastick *Bigot*, who doubtless thought it beneath him to look into the *Merits* of a Religion asserted by such as he might think Idiots, compar'd with *himself*. He had not indeed committed *the Sin against the Holy Ghost*, (as many had done of *that Sect* to which he belong'd,) so that there was room for *Mercy*. I say not these Things to diminish the Character of *him* who was *afterward* so famous an Instrument for the propagating of the Christian Faith. But pray, Sir, let me entreat you to refrain from calling an *outrageous Miscreant*, and one who makes the nearest Approaches possible to an *hellish Fiend*, to refrain, I say, from calling such an one a *very sincere* Man. Can you think the Murderers of our blessed Lord *very sincere* too? for these did *not know*, did *not consider* that they crucified the Lord of Life and Glory. Were the *Irish* Cut-throats in Forty-one *sincere*, whom doubtless an *ignorant Zeal* for the Catholick Faith had stimulated (at least many of them) to those Butcheries?

But, Sir, to argue a little farther with you upon this Topick, why may'nt a *Sensualist* be *very sincere* in the violent Pursuit of *his* Lusts, as well as a *Persecutor*? Does the former act against the Light of Reason? so does the latter. May a *Persecutor* arrive to such a *Stupidity*

dity and Scaredness of Conscience, as to breathe out Threatnings and Slaughter against innocent Persons without any Remorse? to exercise the greatest Barbarities towards those that never did him the least Injury? May not then a swinish Drunkard be suppos'd to arrive to equal Hardness, and to make himself a Brute, with as little Reluctancy as the other makes himself a Devil? Nay, may a Persecutor think that he does God Service by killing his Fellow-Creatures? Why may not a licentious Epicure become so far an Enthusiast also, as to think that he does God Service by giving himself up to all Uncleaness? And indeed nothing is more certain than that some have been so cursedly infatuated, as to imagine that their abandoning themselves to all manner of Debaucheries, serves to exalt the Riches of divine Grace, the Freeness and Fullness and Efficacy of a Redeemer's Blood. Will you therefore call such Monsters very sincere? Were our modern Prophets (as they stil'd themselves) sincere, when guilty of filthy Lewdness, and accus'd (some of 'em) of unnatural Lusts.

You go on, Sir, to speak of the Sincerity of Heathens while Idolaters: I shall not at present enter into that Dispute, whether they were sincere or not, but will boldly say, as far as they were sincere, so far they are excusable, and excus'd. I say the same as to Mahometans, Papists, Deists, and Antinomians: If they can any of 'em (whether more or fewer) plead their Sincerity in a Judgment-Day, this Plea, through the Merits of Christ, shall be accepted. The more I think hereof, the more confirm'd

firm'd I am, that *Sincerity* hereafter will be the great Thing whereon the important Concerns of the next World will turn, in how careleſs a Wayſoever ſome now expreſs themſelves about it. I am perſuaded, the more *Sincerity* there is *now*, the more *Chriſtianity*. This, you know, was *St. Paul's* Comfort, (altho' after his Conversion, not before,) and the Comfort of his Brethren, 2 Cor. i. 12. *For our Rejoicing is this, the Teſtimony of our Conſcience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity we have had our Converſation in the World.* I have examin'd every Place where the Words *Sincerity*, *sincerely*, or *sincere*, occur in our Tranſlation of the Bible, and find 'em always us'd in a good Senſe, as they like- wiſe are in our *common Diſcourſe*.

You blame Mr. N. for making a Feſt of *He- reſy*, as, you ſay, *he ſeems to do ſeveral Times.* P. 58
Why truly, Sir, the Terms *Hereſy* and *Heretick* have long been us'd in a *ridiculous* Senſe by the *Romaniſts*, and deſerve to be expoſ'd to *Scorn*: Nor have many Proteſtants leſs laid them- ſelves open to *Banter* and *Ridicule*, as well as juſt Indignation and Reproof, for robbing the Pope of *his* Infallibility, and arrogating it to themſelves: For it muſt be allow'd, the *old Gentleman* at *Rome* (as impudent a Monſter as he is) talks more *conſiſtently* about *Hereſy* than Multitudes do who have profeſs'd to abandon him. *How many Hereſies* have ſuch as confeſs themſelves *fallible* been ſtill charging one ano- ther withal? ſo that I greatly wonder how you came to ſay, "Here I would obſerve by the P. 28.
" way, that there have been none that I know
" of ever charg'd with *Hereſy* among *Protes-*
" *tants*, but ſuch as have denied the proper
" God-

" Godhead of the Son and Holy Ghost, and who
 " have pass'd under the Denomination of Socin-
 " nians and Arians."

Sir, the very Names that have been given to
 such as were charg'd with *Heresies* in the sever-
 al Ages of the Church, would (I believe) take
 up *some Pages*, if 'twere worth while to recite
 'em. With *these* have Protestants freely stig-
 matiz'd one another: They have been mu-
 tually *charging*, and mutually *charged* with
 those Errors, whose *bare Sounds* have struck
 many private Christians with a certain Horror.
 Sir, did you never hear of *Sabellians*, *Tritheists*,
Psychopannychists, *Anthropomorphites*, *Millena-*
rians, &c? (Pelagians, you know, were rec-
 kon'd Hereticks; for these you mention your
 self in *this Letter*.) Did you never hear, I say,
 of such Hereticks as these among Protestants?
 Mr. *Simon Ford* (afterwards Dr. *Ford*) in a Ser-
 mon at the Assizes held at *Reading* for the
 County of *Berks*, Feb. 28. 1653. has these
 Words, p. 26, 27.

" For this little Town, where your present
 " Employment lies, I speak my Thoughts free-
 " ly, without Spleen or Passion, that I verily
 " persuade myself, if all *Augustine's* and *Epi-*
 " *phanus's* Catalogues of Heresies were lost,
 " and all other ancient and modern Records
 " in that kind, yet it were no hard Matter
 " to restore them, with considerable Inlarge-
 " ments, from hence. We have *Anabaptism*,
 " *Familism*, *Socinianism*, *Pelagianism*, *Ranting*,
 " and now *Quaking* too, (and what not?) and
 " the Devil is served in Heterodox Assemblies
 " as frequently as God in ours."

Sir,

Sir, I cite *this* Passage (as I easily might Multitudes of others from *Authors of Note*) to convince you how *superficially* that Observation of yours is founded; and how little Reason you have to insult Mr. N. as setting up for a *publick Censor*. Divers Instances besides those already mention'd may put you in mind of that.

Turpe est Doctori cum culpa redarguit ipsum.

How trifling are those Animadversions on Mr. N's addressing a Deist: "When you come to speak of the converting of a *Deist* to *Christianity*, you describe the Christian Religion to him in such a Manner, as not to acquaint him with one of the Doctrines that Christ came to declare to Mankind (except *sufficient Assistance*." P. 22, 23.

Why, Sir, 'twas none of Mr. N's Business to explain the *Doctrines* of the Christian Religion to a Deist, before he had convinc'd him of the *Truth* of it. How impertinent must it be to preach to a Deist the Fall of Man, the Corruption of his Nature, &c. as Things reveal'd in Christianity, who believes nothing of *Christianity it self*? Let him first be persuaded of the Reality of the *THING* itself, and then let the Explications of its Doctrines and Precepts follow. With such an one you must talk on the Foot of *natural Religion*: Nor does Mr. N. mention *sufficient Assistance* any otherwise than *collaterally*, as a Doctrine greatly encouraging all to receive the *Christian Faith*. There being in *no other* Institution so many and strong Assurances of divine Grace to assist us, as in the

F Christian,

Christian, Mr. N. thinks no more than your self, that there may be a Christian without Christ, but did not care to talk to an *Unconverted Infidel* in such a way, as would have expos'd himself to Laughter and Scorn.

P. 57.

How needless is that Paragraph? where you observe, "that the Errors of those who lead "sober and virtuous Lives, must be oppos'd "as well as others." Did Mr. N. ever say the contrary? Has he any where dropp'd a Tittle to this Purpose?

P. 61.

How *silly* as well as *unjust*, is your Quarrelling with him for that Expression? viz. That "the great Thing is even uncontroverted, "which is *Holiness* of Heart and Life, found-
"ed on Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

You very gravely ask him, "whether it is "not controverted, *what this Faith is*." I answer for him, Yes, it has been, and is still controverted; and yet Mr. N's Proposition is very true: For notwithstanding all the Controversies agitated about *Faith*, in the Christian Church, 'twas never yet doubted, whether Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, as it is the Foundation and Support of Holiness of Heart and Life, be a true Faith. Good Sir, is such a Faith, as is demonstrated by *all holy Conversation and Godliness*, "a meer Name, or rather "a Nullity with you?

Ibid.

As *poor* and *peevish* is that Stricture of yours on Mr. N. for calling the "Sacraments the "Professions of Subjection to God thro' Christ. "Whereas, you say, the Scriptures plainly re-
"present

“ *present them as Professions of Subjection to Father, Son and Holy Ghost.*” Do you, Sir, yourself, as often as you take the Name of the great G O D into your Lips, whether in solemn Acts of Devotion in your *Confessions, Petitions, Thanksgivings*, in your publick Sermons, or in your private Conversation, annex *Father Son and Holy Ghost* thereunto, that you may not draw on your self the Suspicion of *Arianizing*? Are you willing in your own Case, to be censur’d, “ as neglecting *this thro’ Weakness or Oversight?*” Or could you bear the cruel and barbarous *Insinuation*, that you omitted the same “ to lessen Persons Regards to the *Son and Holy Ghost?* There are, you say, P. 61.
“ *other Objections besides these, which I am forc’d to pass by.*

Is it *Compassion* to Mr. N. and a Concern for his Reputation and Usefulness, that *forces* you to pass them by? Or is it, because you have taken up so much Room in answering the former *Objections*, that you have none left for *Those* that are behind? Or is it because the *Objections themselves* are so pitiful, that *meer Shame* forces you to conceal them? Or is it, lastly, that you thus express your self, because your Readers may feel some Impressions from the *suppos’d bad Things* to be farther Objected against Mr. N’s Discourse, tho’ for your Part you don’t think fit to mention them.

You tell him, “ Had you any Intention to Ibid.
“ be *captious*, you might have taken Notice,
“ that the very *Title* prefix’d to his Discourse,
“ is a *gross Blunder.*” But Sir, your *calling*
it

it a gross Blunder, does not *make* it one. You should have inform'd him where the Blunder lay. Do you think it Nonsense, to call *Practical Christianity Orthodoxy*? or a *Wicked Life Heresy*? or will you allow of no *Tropes* or *Figures* in Speech? Will you rob Language of some of its greatest Beauties and Ornaments? and (which is far worse) will you *sacrifice* hereby a considerable Part of your Bible, to the *Drollery* and *Buffoonery* of Atheists and Infidels? Is that Text in *John* xvii. 3. *This is Life Eternal, that they may know thee, &c.* a Blunder with you or not? Is the *Knowledge* of God (strictly and properly speaking) *Life Eternal*? Is *Faith* a *Victory*? 'tis call'd, 1 *John* v. 4. Is *Faith* a *Substance* (*Προσαις*) as it is stil'd, *Heb.* xi. 1. Numberless Places might be urg'd to this Purpose, viz. to support the *Sense* of Mr. N's Title Page. Being a *Man of such Reading*, he had met with *Metaphors*, *Metonymies*, &c. which encourag'd him to prefix such a Title to his Sermon, as is so far from being a Blunder, that it carries a *peculiar Emphasis* in it. I am therefore sorry methinks (seeing you were *so much in Haste*) that you had not let alone a Remark, which must either expose your Bible or *yourself* to Contempt.

But you suggest, "that Part of it, (viz. the *Title Page*) is borrowed from a great Man, without any Acknowledgment." No Matter, Sir, how great the Man is, when what he writes is *Nonsense*; nor whether his Name be mention'd or not, when 'twould expose the Lender as well as the Borrower. But Sir, do you in earnest charge Mr. N. with *Plagiarism*

giarism on this Account? Or would you have had him prefix a [""] to a Part of his Title, with the great *Author's* Name referred to in the *Margin*?

You farther intimate, how absurdly Mr. N. styles the *Heavenly Blessedness* a PLACE, and likewise the *Misery* of Men in another World a PLACE, putting it into *Capitals*, that the Blunder might be more observable. But do you think, Sir, that 'tis possible for any *Reader* to mistake Mr. N's Meaning? What then can such *Memorandum's* as these be imputed to, but a *vain* and *wrangling Captiousness*? Not to observe that *Place* may refer to *Heaven*, as well as *Blessedness*, by an *easy Synthesis*; *Heavenly Blessedness* and the *Blessedness* of *Heaven* being the same. So *Place* in the other Expression may have a Reference to *World* as well as *Misery*.

But what if *Scripture Phraseology* should support this Blunder too, taking it in *your own Sense*, *Isai. lvii. 2. He shall enter into Peace*. Entering connotes the leaving one *Place* and going to another. Is *Peace* a PLACE? *Matt. xix. 17. If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments*. Is *Life* a PLACE? *Matt. xxv. 46. These shall go away into Everlasting Punishment; but the righteous into Life eternal*. Are *Punishment* and *Life* PLACES?

" I might also, say you, have ask'd you what P. 61.
" you mean by the *Imaginary Torments* of *Hades*.

Would you have ask'd Mr. N. such a Question as this for your own Information? *Learned Soul!*

Soul! Did you never hear of *Imaginary* Deities, *Imaginary* Judges, and *Imaginary* Furies in the *Hades* of the Heathens? Did you never hear of the *Imaginary* Punishments of *Sisyphus*, *Tantalus*, *Ixion*, &c. Possibly you (as well as many other good Men) may never have read of these Things, and may therefore blame Mr. N. for employing his Time in the Perusal of such *Heathenish Trumpery*, when he might have spent it better in reading and studying the Holy Scriptures. But perhaps Mr. N. read 'em only when he was a *School-Boy*, or if he has look'd into 'em since, the *Improvement* that he makes of 'em is very just and useful, viz. by composing the *Gentile* with the *Christian* Account of a future State of Punishments, and shewing the *Superior Influence* this had unto the other, to deter Men from Sin, and to Influence them to an *Holy Life*; he justly sets the *Imaginary* and *Uncertain* Pains of the *Ethnicks* in their *Theology* against those sure, terrible and everlasting Torments threaten'd in the *Gospel of Christ*.

Ibid.

“ You might also have ask'd Mr. N. how he came to make the Gospel Dispensation, consider'd *abstractly*, to consist of two Precepts.” But Mr. N. has not expressly said it doth. He says, indeed, there are *two comprehensive Fundamental Precepts* of Christianity in conformity to *Acts xx. 21. Repentance towards God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*.

The Omission of a *Comma* is the Occasion of your last Question. Read Mr. N's Expression thus, and it is Unexceptionable; *Evangelical Holiness is in order to, a Meetness for the Heavenly Blessedness*.

In

In the Close of your Letter you are willing to let him know how very kind *you* have been to him, how little soever he has deserv'd it, as if you had not Study'd to set forth any things, at least every thing, on which you have animadverted with *artificial Aggravation*. But whether you have or not, your Readers must judge.

As for yourself, many Things occurring in your Performance need no *Art* to aggravate them, but rather a great deal of *Art* to soften them, to make them stand with *Sense*, or *Manners*, or *Christianity*.

Some of these I have now consider'd, but there are *others*, which I thought Mr. Nation himself the fittest to give an Answer unto. Accordingly I received from him the following Letter; which had it not been so long as it is, I should have *inserted* into *my own*, but for that Reason have chosen rather to *annex* it to the same.

I must beg the *Excuse* of the *curious* and *critical* Reader for that *Pedantry* and *Stiffness* of Style I have us'd, which however *seemed* (at least *sometimes*) necessary in Remarks on a Letter of this Kind. And, Sir, if you (for whom 'twas chiefly intended) find any thing *else* that stands in need of being *excus'd*, please to inform me what it is, and (God willing) by the first Opportunity it shall be either *retracted* or *defended* by

Reverend Sir,

Your Affectionate

And Humble Servant.

Matthew TONGOOD

A
LETTER
 FROM
Mr. NATION
 TO THE
AUTHOR.
EXON.

Reverend SIR,

I Have receiv'd yours, and find (having seen the Letter to me by an unknown Hand) you are desirous of knowing of me whether the Insinuations in it concerning my abetting of *Arians* and *Arianism* are just or no; and you are the more desirous of knowing this, because you intend to publish somewhat in Vindication of yourself and Brethren, who gave Thanks for my Sermon.

I think, indeed, it concerns you to vindicate yourselves; for *your* Reputation is struck at as well as *mine*, in the Letter you mention. You may be sensible that for a particular Reason I wish

with Success to your Undertaking, yet is there not much Reason to fear the contrary? When you have to do with so *powerful* and *screwed* an Adversary; one so advanc'd in Years, of the most establish'd Reputation for his vast Sense and universal Learning; so *smart*, *concise*, *consistent* a Writer, one who not only can tell a Man's Words, but his very Thoughts, Designs, Intentions; and, which is *more strange*, can tell such to be his Thoughts and Designs as he never knew himself; one that has the very best Intelligences from *abroad*, can tell not only a Man's private Company, but their secret Conversation, and even such *Conversation* as never past at all; can tell who influences you, or has the *Ascendant* over you, tho' you never told any Person of it, or had any Apprehensions of it yourself. But I will not enlarge, lest I should utterly discourage you; and 'tis your Business to consider what you are going about.

As to what you desire of me about my abetting *Arians* and *Arianism*, and whether Mr. P. C.'s Insinuations are just or no, as far as I know myself, (I don't say but Mr. P. C. might know better) these (tho' direct Charges) are false and unjust.

I have ever believed, and do still firmly believe the true, proper, and eternal Deity of the Son and Holy Ghost. I have been, and am for defending it by all Christian Methods whatever, and I have never said any thing contrary to either of these Things I have asserted publicly or privately in all my Life.

G

From

From this you will wonder at many Things said in the *Letter*; but I was not at all surpriz'd, for I had heard from several Persons I should be prov'd an *Arian*; and I knew a learned Brother of *P. C.*'s had declared in a Publick House I was turn'd an *Arian*.

These Things, I think, are Instances of an *unchristian Zeal*, of *Uncharitableness*, *Injustice*, *Persecution*; and if they are not, I do not pretend to know what is so; but indeed my Knowledge is very small.

If you vindicate the *Sermon*, I think myself oblig'd to vindicate the *Preface*, in which I am represented to have done my Brethren much wrong, and I shall do it in as few Words as I can.

The *Preface* was written at *Fowey* in *Cornwall*, whither I was call'd immediately after the Assembly, and where I had *no one* to consult with; so all I had to do was to recollect myself, and give the most faithful Account of Things I could. This I have really done, and indeed am not conscious to this Day that I have *misrepresented* Things.

P. 10. My Account of the Voting of the Assembly is said by Mr. *P. C.* to be a great Misrepresentation. I could recollect but *nine* to *six*, *nine* against giving Thanks, and *six* for it; yet the Reader will observe, least I should mistake, I say, Pref. "It was voted no Thanks, by a Majority of a- p. 6. bout three." I am not sensible to this Day it was greater, nor *several* of my Brethren I have talk'd with. Those on the *other Side* the Question say, there were *eleven* to *six*. Now suppose it was so,

So, where is the great *Misrepresentation*, and they don't *pretend* more. And farther, supposing there were *eleven* against me, I can prove *two* of those should have been for me, and then the Vote would have been carried but by *one*. A Person against me, *whose Name* I shall conceal, (tho' indeed he does not deserve it at my Hands,) before he came where the Ministers met, declar'd to a Gentleman (who ask'd him about the Sermon) that it was a very good practical Discourse, and did not doubt but I should have *Thanks* for it, or *Words to the like Purpose*, and yet when he came and saw which way Matters were going; he said, *no Thanks*. Another against me declar'd afterward, he found fault only with the *Introduction*. Now, "If there would be less Controversy, were Serml.
"there more Humility, impartial Searches af- p. 2.
"ter Truth, &c." (as every one must allow) then the contrary to *these* are the Occasions of Controversy; so that if Things had been *calmly* debated, this Person must have been on *my Side*.

Perhaps it will be replied, that one of the Ministers who gave Thanks, shewed beforehand some Dislike of the Sermon; but he acquaints me, all he said was, that he with'd two or three Sentences had been left out, otherwise he thought it to be a very good practical Discourse, and even as to *these* Sentences, he was sensible *afterward* there was no Occasion for their being omitted.

Mr. P. C. says, indeed, "That if all had been Lett.
"present, I could not have promis'd myself p. 10.
"the Favour of more than *eleven* in *thirty three*.
I cannot say, indeed, what Persons would have

done in the Trial, because (whatever Knowledge Mr. P. C. has of other Persons Thoughts) I have no such Thing: But this I am sure of, that more *since* have approv'd of the Sermon, as well as several who were not at the Assembly at all.

As to the Objections made against my Sermon, which I have spoke of in the Preface, I could not mind any thing I thought a Support to any Objection; and I could not mention more than I did, unless I had made it *personal*, which as I had avoided in the *Discourse*, so I would in the *Preface*.

Lett.
p. 10.

Pref.
p. 4.

And let it be judg'd whether *here* I have made any *Misrepresentation*: Mr. P. C. says, the first Objection was not as I say; that I had spoken against all Controversies as *metaphysical*, but he might have seen I had not *positively affirmed* this. My Words are, "As I remember, "the first Objection was so."

And how was this Objection supported? Was it prov'd I had meant the Controversy about the Trinity? And indeed could it be prov'd, unless I had confess'd such a Thing? I had mention'd other Controversies that are not *metaphysical*: And farther, 'tis certain, *Metaphysics* have enter'd into most Controversies. However, to satisfy the Generality, tho' I can't promise myself to convince Mr. P. C. I had no Intention to do any Disservice to the commonly receiv'd Doctrine of the *ever-blessed Trinity*.

Ibid.

Another Objection was, "That it was a Sermon of Faith without Works." Mr. P. C. expresses

expresses it somewhat different, "The little
 "Care I had taken of the Faith in the Sermon." Lett.
 'Tho' I did not mention any thing *saïd* to sup- P. 17.
 port this Objection, yet I think, I shew'd there Pref.
 was no Occasion for the *Objection*; And is what P. 5.
 Mr. P. C. mentions any Support to it? That
 works without "Faith were dead, as well as Lett.
 "Faith without Works." Can the *Practical* P. 17.
Christianity I had described be where there
 is no Faith?

Indeed I don't think there was any Occasion
 for the Objection; and can't imagine, why Mr.
 P. C. is so offended, unless because (having no
 Mind to enter into Controversy) I mention
Scripture Doctrines in *Scripture* Terms. THESE
 I do really think are *best*; that our blessed Sa-
 viour knew best his own Mind, and how to ex-
 press himself, and never left it to *Men* to mend
 what he has done, or explain his Mind better
 than he has himself. And as I spake of Scrip-
 ture Doctrines in Scripture Words, so I bid
 Mr. P. C. to tell me, what Doctrine I omitted;
 or I bid him set forth the Doctrine of *the Son*
of God's coming and dying for the Sins of Men
 in fewer Words, or more to Advantage than I Sermon.
 have done. P. 21, 22.

As to the Objection about Personal Reflec- Pref.
 tions, not *one* that I know of was mention'd P. 5.
 in the Assembly; neither was I desir'd to pro-
 duce my *Notes* on that or any other Account:
 and I think what I have saïd already as to this
 Matter must satisfy all unprejudic'd Persons,

Mr. P. C. goes on to mention Objections I Lett.
 had forgot, or could mind little of. P. 40.

That

That I had spoken favourably of the Heathen Idolatry, and he says, *Magisterially* (tho' indeed not so *Magisterially* as he has reprov'd me for it) excus'd all *Protestants* from the Charge of Idolatry.

As to my excusing the Heathens, I can't remember any Thing mention'd about it in the Assembly, and as to the Thing itself, might not a Person mention to *Learned Men* what he thinks capable of being improv'd, without being censur'd for it? Besides, 'tis well known a late *Mr. Grove* ingenious Author has gone much farther in excusing the Heathen Idolatry than I have done. And how often have I heard such a Person as *Mr. Enty* warmly speak against Persons condemning the Heathen World in the *Lump*. I will ask that Gentleman, if they are guilty all of 'em of *Idolatry* of one kind or other, (which there is no *Learned Man* but will say) and this *Idolatry* be *inexcusable*, whether they are not all condemn'd? And has not *Mr. Enty* wrote against *Mr. Hallet's* advancing that the Immortality of the Soul is not to be prov'd by the *Light of Nature*? And what occasion was there for it? Or how could it be done to any Advantage, unless there were some Instances of Heathens that were good Men? *The Ingenious Author above* was sensible, that to prove the Immortality of the Soul by the *Light of Nature*, there must be some such Instances, and accordingly sets himself to *excuse* the Heathen Idolaters.

As to my Excusing al' *Protestants* from Idolatry, all that I can remember mention'd in the Assembly to support this Objection was, that Archbishop *Tillotson* had charg'd Idolatry on the *Socinians*: And was this so very much to the Purpose?
I had

I had said, " As Protestants professedly ^{Serm. P. 9.}
 " worshipp'd the one true God, thro' the one
 " Mediatour the Lord Jesus Christ," they
 would not, according to this their Profession,
 be charged with either of the *two Sorts* of
 Idolatry I had been speaking of ; which must
 be allowed, I said, from any Person's *private*
 Schemes, as far as I *knew* them. I could not
 certainly prove a Charge of Idolatry on them,
 and as I could not, 'twas not my Business to
 judge them, but to leave them to God.

If I was Ignorant, should not my Brethren
 have inform'd me better, instead of censur-
 ing me ? Or must I be blam'd for not con-
 demning Men, when I can't see I should do it ?

I had made no Mention of *Arians* and *Soci-
 nians*, tho' Mr. P. C. is pleas'd to take it for
 certain that I intended them, and suppose I had,
 and had thought that they worshipp'd Christ
 only as Mediatour, how are they in this guilty
 of Idolatry ? That there is a Regard due to
 him *as such* is most certain, and what many
 Learned Divines have asserted ; and what if I
 had been mistaken in *This*, being young I
 might have grown *Older* and *Wiser*.

As to my being for *promiscuous* Communion ^{Lett. P. 59.}
 with *Arians*, which Mr. P. C. is pleas'd *in his*
Way to tell the World of, tho' (with all his
 Knowledge) 'tis more than he does know any
 thing of, I have never yet been put to the
 Tryal, whether I would communicate with
 such or no. But if I was, and believed these
 Hereticks to be Idolaters, I hope I should act
Consistently.

And

And now since there is so great Noise about the Idolatry of *Arians*, tho' I shall mention no Names, unless I am call'd on to do it, where is *Persons Consistency* with such a *Belief*? One, who was well known in the Learned World, a Man of too great Simplicity to conceal his *Sentiments*, was in Dr. *Clark's* Scheme, and yet communicated with a Member of the *Exon* Assembly, and an Acquaintance of those who refused to give Thanks. Another, who has been very frank in declaring his Sentiments was in Communion with another of the Assembly, one of those who *refus'd* to give Thanks, and that for many Years, and never refused. And I know Persons of this Town, that were in Communion with the *Arians*, and with the *Orthodox* at the same Time, and at a Meeting which the *Four Orthodox Ministers* equally took care of, and that for many Years, and never had a word said to them, as they tell me. Now if these Things be so, do Persons believe what they talk so much of *Themselves*.

And further, suppose there were no such Instances to be produc'd: Those Orthodox Ministers, who live in those Places where are a great many of those *Arian Hereticks* and *Idolaters*, if they believe such Hereticks to be Idolaters, by whom their own People might be infected, to act consistent with such a *Belief*, 'tis not enough for them to preach to them and warn them, but they ought frequently to go round, and without Favour and Affection, put the Test to them. I speak *seriously*, every Minister ought to be satisfied as to those in his Communion, that they don't live in that which unfits them for Communion, or on the

the Account of which they ought to be rank'd with Heathens and Publicans : As in *Intemperance, Profaneness, Debauchery, in Scandalous Wickedness*, which things might be easily discover'd ; so certainly he ought to be satisfied, that they don't live in *Idolatry*. And if *Hereticks* may be guilty of it, and *Heresy* is so secret a thing (as it seems) that a Person may be guilty of it, tho' he practises all the Duties of the Christian Life, there is nothing to be done to discover him, but to make a severe Scrutiny ; and this a Minister who believes *Arians* guilty of *Idolatry*, if he would act according to the Dictates of his own Conscience, should make very often : How else does he know, but every time he administers the Lord's Supper, he communicates with Idolaters ? and now to put the Question, has this been done ? This which I have said, may be pass'd over with a *Slight*, but 'tis an Argument not to be answer'd. I will say no more on this ungrateful Subject, and indeed I should not have said so much, had I not been forc'd to it.

Another Objection Mr. P. C. (is pleas'd to Lett. mention) is against my saying, that God *would* P. 52:
make all allowance for the meer Errors of Mens Understandings, when he will make none for their Wickedness. The Sentence at large is, " Let
 " us be so honest as to labour to convince our Sermon:
 " Hearers, that God will make all allowance P. 35:
 " for the *meer* Errors of *Mens Understandings*,
 " when he will make none for their *Wicked-*
 " *ness*, their *Looseness*, *Profaneness*, *Intem-*
 " *perance*, *Debauchery*, *Dishonesty*, their *Sen-*
 " *suality*, that *Covetousness* which is *Idola-*
 " *try*, their *revengeful* and *implacable Spirits*,
 H " their

" their Hatred of one another, their Hypocrisy and such like things ; for they who *" do these Things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."* There was not the least Shadow of a Reason given to support this Objection. A plainer Sentence I think cannot be : And I find common Persons understand the Meaning, which Mr. P. C. with all his *great Discernment* can't, and surely all his Learned Arguing deserves only to be laugh'd at. I do now say, and will stand by it, that to affirm the contrary is *to all Intents and Purposes to discourage the serious inquisitive Christian, and at the same time to open a Gap to all Licentiousness and Wickedness,* tho' I believe, if Mr. P. C. was apprehensive of it, he would abhor the thought of it.

Thus, Sir have I made it appear, I have not misrepresented the Assembly.

Serm.
P. 36.

Mr. P. C. is pleas'd to represent me as making the basest Reflections on the Hearers : such a thing never enter'd into my thoughts. I am sure I had not the least Design to offend any Man ; no, my design was to promote Practical Christianity, and all I said was in order to that end. This, I do think, every impartial Person must be sensible of.

I had heard it represented, that I had not faithfully printed my Sermon : This I was sure could never be prov'd ; neither does what Mr. P. C. says any where prove it. What he mentions about the Idolatry of Heathens is *justly* printed, as any one might see, who reads the Whole I have said about the Heathen Idolatry. That

That of my Mentioning *Faith* as a vital Principle of Holiness, the great Foundation and Encouragement to it, I declare was in my Notes; and if Mr. P. C. will come to me, I will satisfy him of it,

As to the Sermon, there are some *Errata* [in P. 27. L. 20. *Doctrine* should have been *Doctrines*^a [and these I corrected that there might be no mistake] I put the Word *peculiar*: this *Erratum* I wonder, if Mr. P. C. had read my Sermon with any Care, he could not see, and if he had, he must find there was little Reason for his saying I was for *making a Deist* a Christian without a Word of Christ. Another *Erratum* P. 24. L. 13. *Evangelical Holiness is in order to*, there should have been a *Comma* after *to*, and then the Sentence is as it was spoken.

I have, Sir, I am afraid, detain'd you too long, yet I can't but take notice of Mr. P. C.'s Conclusion.

" But even notwithstanding this, I have
" Charity enough to conclude myself, Re-
" vrend Sir, your Affectionate Humble Ser-
" vant, P. C."

I am very sensible of his real and warm Inclination for me; the vast Concern he has for my good Name, Usefulness in the Ministry, for his Family, and what good he would do me if it was in his Power. There can be no fuller Proof of it than his Letter, from the Beginning to the End. I desire he will next write his Name, that I might know where on Occasion to apply to him.

My

My Reverend Brother, We live in an Age
where the *Peace-maker* is the *Peace-breaker*,
and he that most sincerely endeavours for Peace,
the Reward he has is, to have Dirt thrown
on him with both his Hands.

May the God of Peace pour out a better Spi-
rit: Surely we have little Reason to desire
many Years on Earth; we might well long
for the heavenly State and Blessedness, where
all that is disagreeable here will *not be*, but in
the room of it the purest Love, the sincerest
Friendship, the most uninterrupted Peace and
Harmony.

I am, Sir,

Your Sincere Friend,

And Humble Servant,

William Nation

FINIS.



